



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE MUSICAL AMATEUR

## HOW TO BUILD A CHOIR.



THE articles in this department dealing with the matter of church music have strongly advocated the use of a chorus choir. The communication, to introduce which these few words are written, proves incontestably the thorough feasibility of organizing and drilling such a choir, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances. More unpromising material than that provided for my correspondent could hardly be found; and it would be difficult to imagine any trainer beginning his work worse hampered than was he with the prejudiced ill feeling of the whole choir against him. His communication will be of deep interest to all who desire to see our church music rescued from the hands of the operatic quartettes and sentimental soloists who now almost monopolize it; and it cannot fail to interest all who are desirous of the proper progress of music.

As a last word in these introductory remarks, it may be well to forestall a possible misapprehension by stating that the members of the choir here considered are almost entirely from the lower classes of society; and that they are consequently decidedly below rather than above the average of intelligence on any such æsthetic subject as music. This being said, my correspondent shall now speak for himself. C. F.

NEW YORK, April 3, 1881.

MY DEAR FLORIO: I feel that I would like to wait about a year longer before complying with your request, but as I give you credit for not asking for anything which you do not want for a year, I will give you, as well as I can, a short sketch of my work with my choir.

I took charge of it three years ago this spring, and found that I was doomed to much up-hill work if I was going to produce anything satisfactory to my taste. The choir was entirely composed of volunteers. There were five sopranos, one alto, two tenors and three basses, who had been singing together for about a year under the direction of a young man of no experience as an organist, and of no musical training worth mentioning.

My advent being looked upon by many of the choir as the result of personal rivalry with their leader, I found myself at my first rehearsal with three sopranos, one alto, one tenor, and one bass. Not one of these could read a note, and their taste had been cultivated (?) up to the pitch of enjoying "What shall the harvest be?" (Moody and Sankey). Even in music of that calibre it was next to impossible to get the singers out of the fearful habit of disregarding the composer's wishes, and improvising the alto, tenor, and bass as the spirit moved each one. Furthermore, none could be induced to come to any but the evening service.

The problem to be solved may therefore be stated thus: To attain the best possible results in leading congregational singing, with volunteers who were entirely ignorant of the rudiments of music, whose taste was not only uncultivated but misdirected, who were disaffected from the start, who disliked the drudgery of rehearsals,\* and who would not or could not come to more than one service on Sunday; and all this with an appropriation so small that it would not pay for the sheet music alone in some of our uptown churches.

The first thing to be done was to bring in some more material. This was done gradually by selecting some of the best voices in the Sunday-school. It had to be done very carefully, however, because the ladies of the

choir were altogether too high-toned to stand alongside of girls in short dresses. It was nearly eighteen months before I succeeded in adding a sufficient number to the very small nucleus of male voices left me after the change of leaders, to balance the parts.

By the end of the first six months I had a chorus of twelve, and they "turned out" to rehearsals fairly well. As a special inducement to attend, I commenced giving them a half hour of instruction in sight singing at the beginning of each rehearsal. This was a failure, most of them preferring to come after the uninteresting drill, and being satisfied if they learned a new and pretty tune in a couple of weeks. The technical work had to be for the time abandoned.

The only opportunity for the use of anthems or set pieces being during the taking of the collection, it was necessary to find short and easy compositions of this kind, which should also be melodic enough to tickle the untrained fancy. During this year we used several sentences, etc., by Lowell Mason, and others taken from the "Carmina Sacra." I name the best of these, or rather those that were the favorites and helped to interest the singers and lead them a step higher in taste: "Song of Praise in the Night," p. 292; "Thanksgiving Anthem," p. 296; "The Lord is in His Holy Temple," p. 305; "The Earth is the Lord's," p. 253; "But in the Last Days," p. 273. After considerable perseverance "How holy is this Place," p. 270, had to be given up as too difficult, the parts not running together.

Early in 1879 the interest had grown, and all those who joined the choir after that time were induced to promise to attend the morning service if possible. The good example was pretty generally followed, and nearly all those who were not detained by household duties in the morning came to church twice. This made more new music necessary, and increased the interest in rehearsals. The altos, tenors, and basses were learning to carry their parts more independently of the soprano, and if the parts were not too complicated and the melody in each was reasonably apparent, the result was quite good. We used in the first half of this year among other things, "Blessed be the Name of the Lord," by T. F. Seward, from the "Sacred Lute;" a "Bonum Est" in B flat, by L. O. Emerson; "He shall feed His Flock," from the "Sacred Lute," p. 260, and "Come unto Him," from the same, p. 261.

During the summer of this year a considerable enthusiasm was aroused by a means outside of the regular line. The annual Sabbath-school picnic was to take place. The choir was going as a unit, and was requested to prepare some secular choruses to enliven the trip. The music being entirely in my hands, I selected such players as could bring instruments which would make a good accompaniment for voices, and had all the pieces we were to use specially scored for the brass band. The novelty and the "splurge" (excuse the word) accomplished the desired effect, and the following songs and choruses were performed moderately well, but to the perfect satisfaction of singers and audience: "Slumber Sweetly," by E. P. Parker; "The Rivulets," by Chase; "My Pretty Red Rose," and two or three other of the popular songs with chorus of that season.

The organ used to accompany the choir was a very old Mason & Hamlin reed organ, and it became necessary to have a new one, but the church was unable to afford it. The choir agreed to give a concert. Of course much work was necessary. The programme was almost entirely sacred, and the accompaniments were played alternately on the old organ, and a new one kindly lent by Mason & Hamlin. The affair was a signal success, for the audience voted that the new instrument must not be returned to the ware rooms, and subscribed on the spot nearly the whole amount necessary for its purchase.

Now I commenced giving them good modern church music, in small doses and by gradual approach. Before the end of the year we had learned a "Jubilate" in A, by Bridgewater, a more pretentious and effective

"Jubilate," by A. W. Berg, and some other anthems of less difficulty. This year the choir (now numbering twenty-two) led the music at the Christmas celebration, the accompaniments being organ, piano, and chimes.

At the beginning of 1880 a prize was offered to every member of the choir who should not be absent during the year from more than eight services—the equivalent of four Sundays—which is the usual vacation granted to paid choirs. Six of the members earned this reward.

A taste for work seemed by this time to have been formed, and in April, 1880, another concert was given, one half of the proceeds being given to the church, the other half devoted to the purchase of music and a music closet (our library beginning to assume respectable proportions). Let me say here in parenthesis that hitherto the finances had not admitted of the purchase of more than one copy of any book or of any anthem in sheet form. Copies of the "parts" were made, until the hektograph made it possible to give each one a full vocal score without too much labor.

At this concert the most difficult things were "May Day," the well known glee by Müller, arranged for mixed voices by V. Novello, and "The Bells of St. Michael's Tower," written especially for the choir by yourself. You know whether this latter is very easy music.\* In the fall another concert was given entirely for the benefit of the church.

During this year an exact record was kept of the number of rehearsals and the work accomplished at each. The summary is as follows:

Total Rehearsals for the year 1880.....	40
Number of New Hymns and Sunday-school Tunes learned.....	28
"    Set pieces.....	9
"    Christmas carols.....	5
"    Secular choruses.....	8
"    Jubilee Songs (for a Special Service).....	5
Total.....	55

The quality of the music this year was far above that of any preceding time, as will appear from the following list: Among the hymn and Sunday-school tunes were, "Hark, hark, my Soul," (Dykes); "O Paradise," (Barnby); "Art Thou Weary?" (Monk); "Lead, Kindly Light," (Dykes); "Let Jesus Christ be Praised," (Barnby). Among the Christmas carols, "Once Again, O Blessed Time," (Dykes); "Child Jesus," (Gade); and "We march to Victory," (Barnby). Among the anthems, "Gloria in Excelsis" (Tours). Since the first of January this year we have learned an average of two new church or Sunday-school tunes at each rehearsal, and an average of one new anthem at each two rehearsals. The last anthem learned is "The Lord is Loving," by Garrett.

Toward the close of last year I received a written request signed by every member of the choir that I would devote a short time at each rehearsal to instruction in the rudiments of music. I leave that to speak for itself after what I have said about my failure to interest the choir in the same thing two years before. They will learn to read very readily, for the weekly practice they have had has taught them to guide themselves very considerably by the notes they see, and it will not require very much drill to make them fair readers of church music, even if not the plainest.

The effect of the improved performance of the choir upon the singing of the congregation is marked. They sing in better time and tune, with more spirit, and have learned a large number of new tunes, thus lessening the monotony inseparable from the constant repetition of a limited number of tunes.

The effect on the Sunday school singing is still more apparent, the taste for a higher class of music having been born and fostered, so that the favorite tunes in the Sunday-school now are those beautiful compositions of Dykes, Barnby, Smart, Sullivan, Calkins, and others, which are becoming more and more popular as they are becoming better known.

\* Justice compels me to state that "The Bells of St Michael's Tower" was a somewhat unjustly difficult work. The truth is, I got excited over the composition and went ahead regardless of the possibilities. Its very awkwardness, however, makes the fine performance it received at the hands of the choir all the more creditable to both leader and singers. C. F.

\* One rehearsal per week was all that it was possible to have.



I believe that my experience shows conclusively:

1. That *no church* need be without a good chorus choir and good congregational singing.
2. That even under unfavorable circumstances three years is enough time in which to attain this end.
3. That, however low the popular taste in the church may be, it can be raised by judicious, gradual, but persistent striving for the higher and better class of music.
4. That with patience and energy it can be done even at a very small outlay.

I want to add that in the partial lists given above, I have taken only specimens. Each list might have been considerably lengthened without naming anything of less merit. For instance, in the list following the summary of what was accomplished in 1880, anthems by Goss and Barnby and Kent might have been added as well as such tunes and carols as "Welcome Happy Morning," (Calkins); "Onward, Christian Soldier," (Sullivan); "Rejoice, Believers," (Barnby); and "Hosanna we sing," (Dykes).

A. T. S.

## New Publications.

**THE GREAT MUSICIANS.** Edited by Francis Hueffer. New York: Scribner & Welford. We have received three of these volumes: Wagner, by the editor; Schubert, by H. F. Frost; Rossini, by H. Sutherland Edwards. These are well written, very complete as biographies, and the appendix to each, which gives the titles and dates of all the works of the composer under consideration, makes the books invaluable as works of reference. The style in which they are written is clear and interesting; and in their somewhat original bindings, with a pattern of butterflies and conventionalized flowers stamped in gilt, they are a fit ornament for the study table of any music lover.

"**SKETCHING FROM NATURE IN WATER-COLORS,**" by Aaron Penley, is one of those excellent practical art books which are a specialty with the publishers, Messrs. Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co. At the present season, the large, handsome volume before us will have peculiar charms for the many of our readers who are looking forward with pleasure to rambles this summer by the seashore or through glade and woodland, sketch-book in hand. Mr. Penley's manual guides the sketcher in the use of his colors, points out the importance of good and truthful drawing, presenting to the pupil, so far as can be done without personal instruction, the means and manner of the manipulation. The book is chiefly made up of colored plates, admirably printed by chromo-lithography. The treatment of two of the illustrations is given in different stages of progression, but, as the author says in his introduction, "it is not intended that the work should be of such an elementary character as to assume that those who study from it are entirely ignorant of water-color drawing. It rather supposes previous practice and tuition; and, under this impression, it introduces to the amateur subjects likely to lead him on to a more clear and definite comprehension as to how they are begun, continued, and brought to completion."

"**THE BOKE OF SAINT ALBANS,** by Dame Juliana Berners," has been daintily reproduced in fac-simile of the very rare original work, uniform in size and style with "Treatyse on Fysshinge with an Angle," by the same writer, noticed in our columns a few months ago. It is printed on hand-made paper, demy quarto, with large margins, and is bound in vellum. A very small edition has been published. Mr. J. W. Bouton has just received a few copies for American subscribers.

**THE MAGAZINE OF ART FOR APRIL** is fully up to the standard of excellence of this beautiful publication. The frontispiece is a bold woodcut, after M. Karl Ooms' painting, "The Forbidden Book." An article on The Dulwich gallery is followed by the second part of an interesting article on wood-carving, and is illustrated with three striking illustrations. Léon Bonnat, of whom there is an excellent portrait, is the "living artist" of the month. Two of his pictures are given: "St. Vincent de Paul Taking the Place of a Convict," which we consider the best engraving in the number, and "Ribera at Home," the original of which happens to be at present in Knoedler's gallery. Other illustrated articles are, "Symbolism in Art," "A Roman Majolica Manufactory," "Architectural Sculpture," "The Ideal in Ancient Painting," and "The Royal Scotch Academy Exhibition."

**THE PORTFOLIO** for April contains a bold etching by Heywood Hardy of the head of an African elephant; one of the Town Hall of Manchester, by T. Riley, and a capital reproduction by the Amand-Durand process of Lukas van Leyden's "Abram Kneeling before the Angels." J. W. Bouton.

**SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY FOR MAY** has among its best illustrations those accompanying an article on "The Wild Sheep of the Sierra." Those by J. C. Beard are specially to be commended for the beauty of their drawing, which has been carefully preserved by the engravers; the head of a Rocky Mountain

wild sheep has been admirably cut upon the block by Mr. R. A. Müller. Mr. Blum's illustrations of the poem "Calpurnia" are executed in the most mannered style of the Scribner impressionist school of engraving. How can one approve such modelling of arms as seen in each of these four woodcuts, or be satisfied with such violent foreshortening as that of "the heavy-eyed Augur" in the first of them? "In and Out of London with Dickens" is continued; some of the illustrations are particularly good. A portrait of Carlyle, cut by Cole, is printed on plate paper as a frontispiece. Technically, it is a charming example of artistic wood-engraving, but as a portrait for a magazine illustration, it is, to our mind, far from satisfactory. As in his Holmes and Bryant portraits, Mr. Cole gives us a ghost instead of an object of flesh and blood—a shadowy face fading away as it nears a uniformly darkened surface, with hardly an indication of form, but presumably intended for the neck and shoulders of the man.

**THE AMERICAN ART REVIEW FOR APRIL** has a clever little etching by C. F. Kimball, called "Old Houses at Stroudwater." While not particularly interesting, it is artistic in quality and agreeably simple in execution. The other etching of the number is a luminous plate by Unger, after Munkacsy's "Preparing for School." Other illustrations are an old-fashioned steel engraving of "A Sibyl," by A. W. Casilear, from a painting by Mr. D. Huntington, a carefully-executed woodcut by Kruehl, from a portrait by Mr. Huntington of the latter's father, and a similarly good piece of engraving by Closson of Munkacsy.

"**THE FIRST OF MAY.**" A new poem, illustrated luxuriously in photo-gravure, with a series of fifty-two designs, exclusive of five additional, consisting of titles, dedication, etc., all from original drawings by Walter Crane, is announced as ready for publication by Mr. J. W. Bouton, in connection with Messrs. Henry Sotherton & Co., the London publishers.

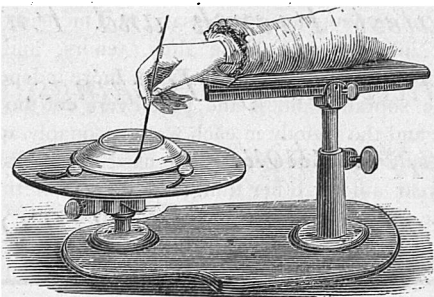
## Correspondence.

### A CHINA DECORATING WHEEL.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Will you please tell me in your next number where I can obtain a wheel such, as used by china-decorators for making circles, and what is the price? E. W., Cleveland, O.

ANSWER.—Messrs. J. Marsching & Co., 21 Park Place, New York, sell such a wheel. An illustration of it is given herewith. It is claimed that any plaque, plate, jug, vase, cup, or saucer, whose staff is not more than 20, or less than 1½ inches in diameter, placed within the jaws upon the face of the disk, can be centered quickly, by turning the thumb-screw on the side of the disk. The hand-rest can be moved forward and back, right or



left, at any height or angle, according to one of two shafts used; the shorter shaft allowing 10, the longer 16 inches of direct height. The rest is moved forward and back, or at an angle, by setting the thumb-screw in either of the two holes on the left side of the head of the shaft, raised up and down and held in position by setting the thumb-screw in the head of the pedestal. The decorator, after putting both article and hand-rest in proper position, can revolve the disc with perfect ease, with thumb and fingers placed upon the milled worm on the hub of the disk. In a few trials one can learn readily to handle the brush, band, and rim accurately, from the finest to the widest line, according to width of brush used. The price of the wheel complete is \$12.

### THE LATE PRANG COMPETITION—MORE COMPLAINTS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: I learn from an artist who had two sketches upon exhibition at the Kurtz gallery during the Prang Christmas-card competition, that the owners can get back their sketches only by applying in person or by sending a written order to a friend in this city who must *present* it and receive the sketch. I also learn from other artists who live at a distance that Mr. Moore does not even show them the courtesy of a reply to their several letters to him. One artist tells me she has written him three letters.

T. B. FOWLER, New York.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Your article in the last number of *THE AMATEUR*, showing an evident interest in the cause of contributors to the recent Christmas card competition, must be my excuse for troubling you with my affairs.

Not having seen the exhibition, I did not question the justice of the awards, but at its close, from a natural desire to have my own again, I wrote to Mr. R. E. Moore requesting him to return my design, or, if necessary, to notify me of any charges due thereon. I have had no response, and your remarks lead me to suppose that the delay may be intentional. I do not even know

the number of the design in the exhibition, but it was designated by the letter H and the motto "Sans détour."

Will you, if it is not asking too great a favor, give me your advice, for which I shall be sincerely obliged?

Very truly,

RACHEL E. HENDERSON.

135 Sheffield Street, Allegheny, Pa.

ANSWER.—We presume Mr. Moore is overwhelmed with business, but, if you have not yet heard from him, we suggest that you send him a postal card every two or three days, and he will, no doubt, soon respond. See, for your encouragement, St. Luke, xviii. 2-5.

### ART INSTRUCTION IN NEW YORK.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Where would a stranger in New York obtain the best instruction in drawing and water colors—from still life and nature—during a portion of the fall and winter months, supposing one desired training in the principles and best methods of such work? Something which should be genuine and thorough as far as it goes, even if the student were only able to take a short elementary course. (2) Is there a school of wood carving and modeling in the city accessible to strangers, and if so how shall I find out something about it? (3) Can you give me the address of the Philadelphia firm who make the ingrain rugs mentioned in the April number of *THE ART AMATEUR*?

M. W. N., Grand Rapids, Mich.

ANSWER.—(1) The Art Students' League offers many advantages to one desiring such instruction as you name. Address the Secretary, 108 Fifth avenue. Inquiries for terms and conditions at the schools of the National Academy of Design and the Cooper Institute might also be sent to their respective secretaries. We must tell you, though, that "a short elementary course" amounts to very little, as it is impossible for a novice to acquire in a short time what it takes even a skilful artist a very long time to learn. The shortest course should include every day for six months, and even after that the pupil would not know a great deal. (2) We know of no place in New York where wood-carving is well taught. Modeling is taught at the schools already named. (3) For the rugs mentioned, address J. & J. Dobson, New York.

### PAINTING UPON SATIN.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: I wish to paint a design of some figures upon satin. Will you please give me directions for making the flesh tints (light and dark), and the shadows for the same?

SUBSCRIBER, Marietta, O.

ANSWER.—You will find the information in the November number, page 118, in the water-color columns of the table there given. To use the colors on satin you will have to mix them with Chinese white.

### THE PERMANENCE OF SOME COLORS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Can you tell me (1) whether the color made by Winsor & Newton, called "Orient yellow," is permanent or not? (2) Is Schönfeld's "Vert Emeraude"?

M. W., Providence, R. I.

ANSWER.—(1) We believe that it is permanent. (2) We have heard of no complaints concerning it. The oil colors most subject to change are the lakes.

### ABOUT OUR MARCH PLAQUE DESIGN.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: I wish to paint the design in the March number of *THE ART AMATEUR* (goldfinch, butterfly, and rose), on a porcelain plaque, but I find the directions given insufficient to enable me to do so. The plea for simple designs has been responded to, and now I venture to ask for *very plain* directions for painting them for those who cannot conveniently take lessons, or those who live in the country and cannot obtain competent teachers, and are obliged to learn what they can from books on the subject. I wish to ask several questions concerning the plaque in question: 1. Should the light ivory yellow be laid on with a brush first, and fired; then the blue—the blue tint growing fainter as it approaches the yellow at the bottom? 2. For the first painting of the rose, "light sky-blue, with yellow for mixing," does that mean light sky-blue with a little yellow mixed with it? and which yellow? The white of the china is not the proper shade, I suppose; is it? 3. With what shall I outline or sketch the design? Should the outline be visible after firing? 4. Should the heavy lines in the stems be put in with a pen before the gray and brown is put on? 5. Directions for painting the leaves and stems: "Deep chrome green, with yellow for mixing." Does that mean the deep chrome green with yellow (and which yellow?) mixed with it? Where shall I find the simplest and best directions for painting over the glaze on porcelain?

M. O. G., Chicago.

ANSWER.—We are always pleased to give additional directions for executing the designs we furnish our readers; but, of course, it would take too much space to repeat in each number the first principles of china-painting. Appreciating the fact, however, that every month brings us many new readers who have not seen the general directions given in previous issues of the magazine, we begin in the present number a new series of instructions for beginners, which will include every branch of china-painting. And now as to your queries: (1) Lay in the "sky-blue" with a brush—round or flat—putting the color deeper on the top and gradually vanishing into the white of the china. Stipple it with a "putois." Do the same with the "ivory yellow" on the opposite side. (2) The yellows generally "eat" the other colors, and "yellow for mixing" (*jaune à mêler*) is the name of a special